

RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

ment, however, from closing it for revolutionary propaganda. Its place was soon filled by a new organ, *Eqlasad-i-Iran* ("Economics of Iran").

Work for the promotion of trade unionism did not exhaust the activities of the party. They spread to the press and to parliament, although usually in a more or less disguised form. With regard to the press, the propaganda conducted by Soviet Ministers Rothstein and Shumiatsky, mentioned earlier in this work, was of inestimable value. Encouraging any manifestation of nationalistic, democratic, or liberal spirit among the Iranian intelligentsia or merchant classes, the envoys succeeded in creating a number of pro-Communist or pro-Soviet papers, edited by all sorts of men ranging from genuine liberals disgusted with the antiquated system of government in their country to ardent Soviet sympathizers of the fellow-traveler type.

Communist influence in parliament was of a less tangible character. In the Fourth Majlis, which convened in the summer of 1921, the deputies were divided into so-called Majority and Minority groups. The latter was headed by Suleiman Mirza, who professed to be a Socialist. Suleiman Mirza had originally been a member of the old pro-German Democratic Party. After the war, he and Mussavat organized the Social Democratic Party (*Ejtcuayun Amiyun*), in which were merged the Left Democrats and some Independent Socialists. Neither of these groups had strength among the masses, but after their unification by Suleiman Mirza, the new party sought active support among the trade unions. Thus it had a link with the Communist-influenced labor organizations. Suleiman's Minority de-

fended in the Majlis the strike of teachers, which broke out in 1921, and organized mass demonstrations in the streets. Eventually this group became a front for the Communist party. Led by Suleiman Mirza and Reza Rusta it took a vigorous part in the electoral campaign to the Fifth Majlis in 1923 under the name of the National Bloc. Rusta's name was to reappear twenty years later in Iranian politics as one of the most active Communists. Although the National Bloc managed to gain some support among the proletarian masses in Teheran as well as in Enzeli, Kerman, and Tabriz, it was defeated in the elections. The government as well as the British accused it of being pro-Soviet and desirous of spreading anarchy and revolution.